

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

September 7, 2012

Mr. Irl F. Engelhardt
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Patriot Coal Corporation
12312 Olive Boulevard
Saint Louis, Missouri 63141-6448

Dear Mr. Engelhardt, 

I have been closely following the recent bankruptcy filing by Patriot Coal Corporation. I am encouraged that your company plans to emerge from bankruptcy in a more competitive position, but am also deeply concerned about the very serious consequences this bankruptcy could have on employees, retirees, and their families.

Generations of West Virginia coal miners have dedicated their careers to making Patriot and the entire coal industry a success. These employees and retirees have spent decades working hard under the promise of fair wages, safe working conditions, secure pensions, and lifetime health care benefits. I am therefore troubled that Patriot has indicated that it is reviewing pension and health care benefits as potential sources of savings as it restructures – especially since all of these benefits were contractually agreed to or voluntarily assumed by Patriot; the company from which it was spun-off, Peabody Energy; and the company it acquired, Magnum Coal Company, which itself was spun-off from Arch Coal, Inc.

I understand that Patriot is in the process of reviewing its labor costs, along with other aspects of its business, and will soon submit a plan for revisions to the United Mine Workers of America. As this process moves forward, I urge you, in the strongest possible terms, to uphold the commitments that were made relating to pension, health care, and other benefits for your employees and retirees. Any efforts to strip these individuals of their earned benefits through the bankruptcy process would be severely unjust.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to receiving information from you about any proposed revisions to employee and retiree benefits.

Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV